

MY FAVORITE ...

Destination: Osaka, Japan

Charity: The Tony Hawk Foundation (tonyhawkfoundation.org), which helps support and partially fund skate parks across the U.S.

Web Site: ShredOrDie.com

Technology: My 17-inch MacBook Pro

advance

HIGH ACHIEVERS.
NEW DEVELOPMENTS.
NOVEL IDEAS.

CATCHING UP WITH ...

Tony Hawk

The skateboarding icon makes a successful transition to businessman

Tony Hawk, co-owner of Birdhouse Skateboards, has come a long way since he first jumped on a skateboard more than 30 years ago. The 42-year-old former professional skater is also an actor, video game producer, event promoter, clothing designer, host of a weekly radio show, and the author of three books. In 2009, sales of Tony Hawk branded products eclipsed \$275 million. One of his latest ventures is Tony Hawk: RIDE, a video game with a wireless, hands-free skateboard as a controller. — Pat Olsen

Q. What are you good at as a business owner?

A. Intuition. When I see something, I know in my gut if it will work.

Q. Is there any one area you need to improve upon?

A. I could devote more time to a project occasionally. Sometimes I think what I've done is sufficient and I don't monitor it enough.

Q. Is there anything you wish you'd done differently in your career?

A. I wish I had never invested in a high-end denim company years ago. It put a strain on our finances.

Q. Any other mistakes you've learned from?

A. Giving a licensee final approval over the use of my name and likeness. I didn't approve of the products the company chose to put them on. I no longer give anyone final approval.

Q. Do you ever worry about getting too big?

A. Only if I can't personally oversee a project. But I prioritize my time and I don't over-think things.

Q. Whom do you bounce ideas off?

A. Sometimes my friends, or depending on what age group the product is for, my kids. If it's a video game, I'll see if my kids like it.

Q. What is the target market for your skateboards?

A. Kids ages 4 to 14. Kids at the older end [of that range] are savvy; they're up on technology and what is real. They can see through prepackaged marketing schemes, and they want to know that if you're endorsing a product you truly believe in it.

Q. You're seen as a role model. How does that inform your business decisions?

A. If I take something on, I have to be proud to show it to my kids. If there's something I have to hide from them, then that's not something I should be involved with.

DAVID JOHNSON/CORBIS OUTLINE

